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NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN AND ITS SHORES"

New Series

DECEMBER, 1908

Vol. 6, No. 3

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON BULLETIN

The Acquisition of Oregon Territory

Part. 1. Discovery and Exploration.

By JOSEPH SCHAFER, Ph. D.

Head of the Department of History



Published Monthly by the University of Oregon, and entered at the postoffice at Eugene, Oregon, as second-class matter.

FRED LOCKLEY
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1243 East Stark St.
PORTLAND, ORE.

MS 37580.45.5



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The
Acquisition of Oregon Territory

PART I.

Discovery and Exploration

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west, The Pacific Slope and
Alaska, Etc.**

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The Acquisition of Oregon Territory

Part 1. Discovery and Exploration. *

I. Exploration of the Oregon Coast.

The earliest voyages along the Pacific seaboard, of what is now the United States, were made by Spaniards. The expedition of Cabrillo and Ferrel, from Mexico in the year 1542-3, brought into view nearly the entire extent of the California coast; these discoveries were confirmed, and extended to at least the forty-second parallel—the southern boundary of Oregon—by Vizcaino and Aguilari in 1602-3. But having thus early established a claim upon more territory than she was ever able to subdue and occupy in a thorough manner, Spain took no further interest in maritime discoveries northward from Mexico for one hundred and seventy years. When she at last bestirred herself, in 1774 and 1775, sending out expeditions as far north as Alaska, the purpose was not to seek a new field for the expanding energies of her people; history proved that they were not able to make proper use even of California. The northern voyages were undertaken in response to a species of counsel of despair. The Spaniards feared that Russia, already lodged in Alaska, would come down the coast, and that England might succeed in finding a northwest passage from the Atlantic into the Pacific, jeopardizing all Spanish possessions along that coast; they hoped to avert both of these calamities by fastening their claim upon as great a stretch of coast as possible. In a word, the voyages of Perez, Heceta and Bodega, while notable as exploits of eighteenth century seamanship, and historically fortunate in becoming connected with the American territorial claims of half a century later, represent a forced, irrational expression of the Spanish national life, and could not have been expected greatly to benefit that nation. On the other hand, it can be shown that British navigators were brought to these coasts, independently of the Spanish activities,

*The present paper is designed to cover one feature of the historical process by which the territory of Oregon, or the region known as the Pacific Northwest, fell into the hands of the United States. The attempt has been made to set out the essential facts relative to discovery and exploration, not for the sake of their dramatic effect as part of a historical narrative, but for the bearing they have upon the evolution of a title to territory. The facts relating to the early history of the occupation of the Oregon country will be presented in the same spirit. Finally an attempt will be made to clear up the questions of diplomacy involved in the acquisition of Oregon. On this head the author has recently come into possession of a large amount of new data, gleaned chiefly from the manuscript sources preserved in the archives of the British Government.

1 A convenient and careful summary of these voyages may be found in Davidson. *Voyages towards the Northwest Coast*. U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. Report, 1886.

and almost contemporaneously with them, in direct response to a strong national demand for commercial expansion, and as a feature in a well matured, consistent policy of maritime discovery.

The search for a Northwest Passage, so ardently pursued by the British during the first third of the seventeenth century, was thereafter partially, though not wholly, intermitted.² The idea of continuing the search from Hudson's Bay persisted,³ so that when, in the twenty-second year of Charles II the Hudson's Bay Company was organized, one of its professed objects was to undertake explorations to the northwest from Hudson's Bay with a view to the discovery of a passage into the South Sea; under the charter the company was expected to prosecute this search.⁴ The company, however, which was at first composed of leading courtiers, and afterwards of a few of the merchant princes of London, because engrossed in the safe profits to be reaped from the trade, either wholly forgot the exploratory aims professed at the time or seeking its charter, or remembered them only when strenuously importuned by those of its agents who were ambitious to explore.⁵ But at last public sentiment in England grew extremely hostile to the Company, threatened them with loss of the charter for failure to fulfill their engagements to the public, and, in a word, practically compelled them to act.

The man who more than any other was instrumental in arousing the public conscience on the question of the delinquency of the Company, and at the same time blowing the embers of the cooling national ambition to discover the Northwest Passage, was Mr. Arthur Dobbs.⁶ This gentleman studied with care the records

² The early voyages, beginning with Cabot and ending with Foxe and James, may be studied in *Voyages Towards the Northwest*, 1596-1631. Hakluyt Society, V.

³ A convenient summary of the matter is given by Miller Christy in his introduction to the *Voyages of Foxe and James*. Hakluyt Society, 1894.

⁴ Copies of the charter may be found in Dobbs, Arthur, *An Account of the Countries Adjoining to Hudson's Bay*, Ap., and in *Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Hudson's Bay*, 1749, Ap. 1., also in Willson's *The Great Company*, Ap. "The charter recites that the incorporators, naming them, have already "undertaken an expedition for Hudson's Bay, in the northwest parts of America, for the discovery of a new passage into the *South Sea*, and for the finding of some trade in furs, minerals, and other considerable commodities....." the charter was granted "to encourage the said undertaking."

⁵ For evidence concerning the organization of the company at this time, its profits, and its neglect of exploration, see Dobbs *supra*, especially 2-3, 43, 47-48: 93 ff. *Report on Hudson's Bay Company*, *supra*, 231-234, 347, 257, 258-9, 260-61, 262 ff. Its first exploring expedition was sent out in 1719, two vessels, the *Albany* and *Discovery*, under Captains Berley and Vaughn. They never returned. The instructions given these navigators by the company are printed in the *Report on Hudson's Bay*, Ap. XX. A list of the vessels sent out by the company on a similar errand is given in Ap. II of the same report.

⁶ We know very little about his early life. He was born in 1689 or 90, was a member of the Irish Parliament in 1732, and was the author of an *Enclosures Act for Ireland*; he wrote many pamphlets on the question of the Northwest Passage, most of them strictures on the conduct of Capt. Middleton, and was the author of the book cited above which was published in 1744. In 1749 he testified before the House of Commons select committee which investigated the Hudson's Bay Company, and from 1753 to 1765 he was Governor of the Royal Colony of North Carolina.

Some light is thrown upon his character by certain official letters of his recently published in the "Correspondence of William Pitt with Colonial

of all the earlier voyages to Hudson's Bay and convinced himself that the passage existed. He also investigated, privately, the conduct of the Hudson's Bay Company, proving to his own satisfaction that they were doing all they could to prevent the discovery of a passage, which, by developing a great northern commerce would be likely to destroy their monopoly. He took depositions from ship captains, sailors, retired Hudson's Bay servants, and French woodsmen, gathering information upon every phase of northern geography, and upon the state of the company's business in those regions. The results were published by him in 1744 in his book on Hudson's Bay, which, although written in a very bad style, with no sense of order, and with much repetition, is nevertheless in some respects one of the most significant books produced in the first half of the eighteenth century. In it, Mr. Dobbs, who has the characteristics of a true seer, traces for us, with startling distinctness, the great outlines of that maritime and trade policy whose execution was to make up so large a part of English history from his day to ours.

Mr. Dobbs begins with a discussion of the geography, peoples, and potential trade of the Hudson's Bay country and the adjacent regions extending southwest towards the Rocky Mountains and south towards the Great Lakes. He shows that the Hudson's Bay Company have failed to develop the trade of those countries, contenting themselves with maintaining a few factories near the Bay, and there exchanging an unvarying round of trade articles with the Indians who bring down their furs, at a comparatively unvarying but exorbitant price.⁷ In consequence, the French from Canada have been pressing in, and they have already gained a very large share of the trade properly belonging to British subjects in the southern, eastern, and western districts appertaining to Hudson's Bay.⁸ Besides, he says: "The Company avoid all they can making Discoveries to Northward of Churchill, or extending their trade that way, for fear they should discover a passage to the Western Ocean of America, and tempt, by that means, the rest of the English merchants to lay open their trade. . . ."⁹ His remedy is to take away the Company's monopoly and make the trade free to all who desire to engage in it. This would result in the planting of trading settlements in the eastern, southern, and western districts which have been neglected

Governors" etc., 2 vols., N. Y. 1906. He was an intense Protestant of the Anglican type, an ardent hater of France, and an enthusiastic believer in the high destiny of England. When Quebec was taken, Dobbs proclaimed a day of "Solemn Thanksgiving," and composed a hymn to be sung throughout the province. He has been, he says in a letter to Pitt, enclosing the hymn, "a little enthusiastic in my expectations; as the object of my wishes for more than thirty years in regard to the British dominion over North America is now so near its accomplishment." II, 206. Dobbs died in 1765.

⁷ Hudson's Bay, 43, 46-8; 57; also trade tables on pp. 193-202.

⁸ *Hudson's Bay*. See especially testimony of Joseph La France, pp. 29-39; and comparison of French and H. B. Co. for sales in 1743, p. 201. Also, incidents related on pp. 55-6.

⁹ *Hudson's Bay*, 48.

to the advantage of the French, as well as the more complete development of the northern trade.¹⁰

Moreover, by thus pressing southward under the impetus of trade rivalry, the British would soon reach the Great Lakes, and these they ought to secure by planting a strong settlement on the River Conde, which flows into Lake Erie near its southeastern extremity, and there building vessels to navigate the lakes throughout. This settlement, protected by the Iroquois and Fort Oswego, and supported by its neighborhood to the colonies of Pennsylvania and Maryland, whence constant accessions of population might easily be derived, Dobbs regarded as the key to the control of the continent. The French would thereby be confined to Lower Canada, being cut off not only from the Great Lakes but also from the Mississippi. To make assurance doubly sure, another settlement might be made on the Ohio near Lake Erie. "By having the Cherokees and Chicasaws to the southward as a barrier between us and Louisiana," he says, "and by securing the Choctaws, we might spread our commerce beyond the Mississippi; by which means the inland trade of that vast northern continent, much greater than Europe, would in time be wholly enjoyed by us in Britain, independent of any other European Power."¹¹ When we add that Dobbs proposed the acquisition of the Great Lakes and their free navigation by treaty, in case of victory over the French, in war, we have filled up the outline of what may be termed the continental division of his scheme.¹²

The second portion is equally bold, and still more alluring in its character. It embraced, as a point of departure, the opening of the Northwest Passage into the Pacific. This done, an immense trade could at once be begun with China, Japan, the Philippines, and the Spice Islands; with Mexico, Peru, Chili, and all the islands thus far discovered in the Pacific.¹³ But this would be only a beginning; for the Pacific Ocean had as yet been explored only in certain narrow regions, along well defined lines of navigation usually followed by all ships. No doubt, he says, the vast reaches of that ocean not yet searched contain many islands, perhaps continents, inhabited by numerous peoples. He proposed a systematic exploration by Great Britain of the Pacific Ocean in both the southern and the northern hemispheres, for

¹⁰ *Hudson's Bay*, 56-7.

¹¹ *Hudson's Bay*, 61 ff. quoted from p. 65. The scheme of a settlement on Lake Erie and another on the Ohio was launched by Franklin ten years later and for reasons not altogether dissimilar. See Franklin's Works (Bigelow) II; 474. An abstract of Franklin's plans may be found in Alden, *New Governments West of the Alleghanies*, 3-5.

¹² In discussing Dobbs's administration of North Carolina, Doctor Raper says: (N. Carolina, 57) "But to Dobbs it was much more important to aid the other colonies, especially those in the North, than to defend or work for the interests solely of North Carolina. To drive the French from North America seemed to him of far more importance than to make North Carolina a very prosperous province." See also letter to Pitt, Oct. 31, 1759, in which Dobbs exults over present prospects. With the French expelled from the continent, the Mississippi and Mobile in possession of England, the only thing left to do would be "opening the Hudson's Bay trade to give us the whole trade of the northern continent to Mexico." Correspondence of William Pitt, etc., II, 316.

¹³ *Hudson's Bay*, 166-7.

the purpose of bringing these lands and peoples to the light, and beginning a trade with each in turn.¹⁴

In conclusion, Dobbs suggests the method to be followed by Great Britain in making discoveries in the South Sea, and in carrying on a trade with the islands and countries discovered. He says: "If, then, a discovery should be made of this (North-west) Passage, to carry on so vast a trade to advantage, a considerable settlement should be immediately made in California, or rather upon some convenient island near the coast. . . . That settlement should be made the rendezvous for all ships going from or returning to Europe, . . . and should be the head settlement, as Batavia is to the Dutch in India, and from hence the trade might spread to Asia, India, Mexico, and Peru; and from this place the islands in the great South Sea might be discovered, and a commerce be begun with them.

"After this settlement is made secure, another should be formed in a southern latitude, about 30 degrees, about 7 or 800 leagues from the American coast, perhaps the Isle of Easter, or some other island with a good harbor and fruitful soil, where the natives are peaceable and humane, and from thence a further discovery southerly and westerly, and a trade may be begun with these regions, as well as with those nearer the line; so that those two settlements would be as two centers, the one for the southern, and the other for the northern countries and islands dispersed through those seas; when these were made, if the only true and laudable method was followed, of civilizing and assisting the natives, and putting them upon proper improvements in their several countries and islands, suitable to their different climates, that might be beneficial to themselves and proper for trade; the English might be the carriers of all those nations, which would give them an immense profit, and furnish them with all our manufactures, and such other European commodities as they should want, without being at any great expense of people to settle other countries in those seas. Here would be room for improvements in trade for ages to come, and would give full employment to our manufacturers and merchants in Britain, and a perpetual return to wealth; and at the same time, we should civilize and make happy numberless nations, and bring them, by degrees, to be capable of knowing divine truths."¹⁵

Turning from this literary forecast of events to the events themselves, we find first, that the search for the Northwest Passage was resumed as a consequence of Dobbs's agitation. The Hudson's Bay Company, in 1737, had sent out two vessels professedly to make exploration for a passage, but the expedition accomplished nothing of consequence.¹⁶ Mr. Dobbs next turned to the Lords of the Admiralty, inducing them to devote government ships to the object. Two vessels of the navy were selected,

¹⁴ *Hudson's Bay* 134. To show how small a space in the Pacific comparatively, had as yet been searched. Dobbs reviews all the voyages in that ocean of which journals had been published. 133-168.

¹⁵ The quotation is from the last page of the book, 168, with four lines from 167.

¹⁶ Barrow, *Voyages Into the Arctic Regions*, 278-9. No journal of this voyage has been published.

the "Furnace" and "Discovery," and were placed under Captain Middleton and William Moor. The voyage was made in 1741-2; it resulted in a careful survey of the waters north of Hudson's Bay, and in the conclusion that no passage existed.¹⁷ This conclusion Mr. Dobbs undertook to refute; and so influential was he, with public opinion all running in his direction, that he was able to induce Parliament in 1745 to pass an act¹⁸ offering a reward of £20,000 "to any of his Majesty's subjects who should discover a Northwest Passage through Hudson's Straits."¹⁹ He also raised, by public subscription, the sum of £10,000, and purchased two vessels called the "Dobbs" and "California," which sailed in May, 1746, under the direction of Captain William Moor and Captain Francis Smith. The expedition returned in 1747, no more successful than its predecessors had been.²⁰

This was the last attempt to find a passage from Hudson's Bay or Strait. Indeed, for a period of about twenty years, the general question of the Northwest Passage remained in partial abeyance. Meantime, the British Government had secured Canada and the eastern portion of Louisiana in consequence of the Seven Years War. Britain had also become interested in making explorations in the Pacific, and by a series of great voyages, prosecuted by Anson, Byron, Wallis, Carteret, and Cook, had won for herself the vast new empire of which Dobbs, in 1744, had only dreamed.

Anson's voyage was begun in 1740 and terminated in 1744. It had as its object to attack the Spanish power, with which England was then at war, in the Pacific, especially on the coast of South America, and in the Philippines.²¹ Through great misfortunes at sea, the program of offensive warfare could be only partially carried out. Yet, the results of the voyage were important. Anson stormed Payta, a port on the Peruvian coast, and captured it in spite of the weakened condition of his own forces.²² He cruised off the Mexican coast for the Manila galleon, but it went into hiding and escaped him;²³ he then sailed to China, and around the Cape of Good Hope to England. The historian of the voyage²⁴ insists that, had the squadron rounded Cape Horn at the proper season, and thus saved itself from partial destruction, it could easily have captured Baldivia in Chili, terrified that kingdom, and "awed the most distant parts of the Spanish Empire in America."²⁵ He also gave to his English readers a graphic account of the trade between Manila and the Mexican Port of Acapulco, with suggestions as to how British seamen might profit by the information;²⁶ and he described the

17 Barrow, 280-286.

18 18 Geo. II, c. 17.

19 Christy, *Introduction to the Voyages of Foxe and James*.

20 Ibid.

21 Anson's *Voyage Round the World*, 2-3.

22 Ibid.; 187 ff.

23 Ibid.; 249 ff. Anson afterwards sailed from China to Manila and caught the next galleon for Manila, taking a prize valued at \$1,500,000. Ibid., 270-285.

24 Mr. Richard Walter.

25 Anson's *Voyage* 280.

26 Anson's *Voyage*, 283 ff.

Spanish governments along the Pacific as almost at the point of dissolution and only waiting for a power like Britain to give them the coup de grace.²⁷

"Anson's Voyage Around the World" proved a book of uncommon interest to the British public. The first edition was published in 1744, almost contemporaneously with Dobbs's "Hudson Bay," and it ran through seven different editions within four years.²⁸ Moreover, the 1744 account of Anson's Voyage is published in Doctor John Harris's stupendous work, the "Navi-gantium atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca," which summarized the contents of more than six hundred volumes of voyages and travels, was dedicated to the merchants of Great Britain, and had as its chief indirect object the development of British trade.²⁹ Clearly the people of Great Britain were at this time keenly alive to every commercial opportunity that might be presented, in whatever portion of the world.

For the space of twenty years after the return of Anson's expedition, no new enterprise was set on foot in that direction, a neglect easily explained by the wars which practically filled up that interval. Then, in 1764, came the voyage of Lord Byron, who took possession of the Falkland Islands for Great Britain, and made various minor discoveries in the South Sea;³⁰ In 1766 the voyage of Captain Wallis and Captain Carteret, which resulted in the discovery of many islands in the same waters;³¹ finally, the exploits of all of these navigators were surpassed both in magnitude and in brilliancy by the two first voyages of Captain Cook, which occurred between the years 1768 and 1775.³²

Cook thoroughly explored the recently discovered lands, also New Zealand and portions of Australia, besides discovering new islands and beginning the systematic study of the native populations. Returning to England in 1775, he found the Government ready to propose a third expedition, destined to be his last, but also in some respects his greatest.

We have already noted that the voyage of the "Dobbs" and "California" in 1746-7, was the last attempt to discover the Northwest Passage by sailing north and west from Hudson's Bay. But, with public sentiment as it was, there was no possibility that the idea would be dropped by the British people. In 1768 Thomas Jefferys, geographer to the King, published a book to

²⁷ Anson's Voyage, 232 ff.

²⁸ The British Museum contains twenty different editions of Anson's Voyage. See Catalog Anson, George.

²⁹ "As the main point I have had in view has been the setting the history and advantages of commerce in a true light, I presume that I could not have inscribed this performance to more proper patrons." Harris argued for the sending of another expedition to the South Sea in order to "strike out some new branch of commerce." He shows much respect for Dobbs and his views on the Northwest Passage.

³⁰ Hawkesworth, *Account of Voyages*, I, 1-139, passim.

³¹ Ibid; 363-522, describes the voyage of Wallis, and I, 523-676 that of Captain Carteret, who was early separated from Wallis.

³² Hawkesworth, II, III.

prove "The Great Probability of a Northwest Passage," dedicating the performance to Lord Hillsborough. By this time the operations of the Russians had become well known in England, Jefferys having, in 1761, published a translation of Mueller's work, "Voyages from Asia to America, for Completing the Discoveries of the North West Coast of America."

In the years 1769 to 1772 Samuel Hearne, an agent of the Hudson's Bay Company, made his overland journey from Churchill to the mouth of Coppermine River, which he found to discharge into a sea in, as he reckoned it, latitude 71 degrees 54 minutes.³³ The results of this journey, which became known promptly on Hearne's return,³⁴ coupled with the new interest in the Pacific and the improved knowledge concerning the geographical relations between Asia and America, gave a new direction to explorations for the discovery of a passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Instead of looking for it from Hudson's Bay or Strait, as formerly, the idea was adopted of searching in higher latitudes, as for example, from Baffin's Bay; and since Bering's Strait was known to communicate with the Arctic Ocean, and British ships were already busily exploring in Pacific waters, it was resolved to conduct a thorough search from both the Atlantic side and the Pacific side.³⁵

For the second enterprise the Government selected Captain Cook, who had just returned from the second of his successful voyages to the South Sea, and was beyond question the most skillful navigator in the British service. He was expected to follow up his explorations in the South Pacific, but it was these northern operations which were regarded as of greatest importance.³⁶

Cook sailed from Plymouth, England, with two splendidly equipped vessels, the "Discovery" and the "Resolution," July 12th, 1776. After completing his explorations in the South Pacific, which occupied the better part of two years, he ran northward, discovering, early in January, 1778, an island to which he gave the name of his patron, the Earl of Sandwich. According to the secret instructions issued to him on leaving England, Cook was to fall in with the American coast or New Albion, as it was called in allusion to Drake's supposed discoveries,³⁷ at about latitude 45 degrees.³⁸ He in fact sighted the mountains of Oregon at about latitude 44, on March 6, 1778.³⁹ For some days the squad-

33 A journey from Prince of Wales Fort in Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean. By Samuel Hearne, London, 1795, especially 162-4.

34 They were well known to Lord Sandwich when he drew up Cook's instructions in 1776. Cook's Voyage, I, II.

35 Lieut. Pickersgill was sent out, in 1776, to explore from Davis' Strait outward. Pickersgill sailed before June 10, 1776, and attained latitude 68 degrees 14 minutes north, when he was turned back by ice. Forster History of the Voyages and Discoveries made in the North. London 1786 467-9.

36 See Cook's Instructions, Cook's Voyage, 1776-1780, *Introd.* XXXI ff.

37 In fact, Drake made no discovery worth discussing in this paper.

38 Cook's Voyage, *Introd.*, p. XXXII.

39 *Ibid*; II, 258.

ron remained in this region, and was even forced back to nearly the parallel of 42 degrees, the land being usually in sight. Cook named on this portion of the coast Cape Foulweather, also Capes Perpetua and St. Gregory.⁴⁰

After the lapse of fifteen days, the winds became propitious for the northward voyage, and on March 22, Cook found himself in sight of land in latitude 47 degrees 5 minutes. Here he began a careful search for the Straits of Juan de Fuca, concluding there was not "the least probability that any such thing ever existed."⁴¹ In latitude 48 degrees 15 minutes he named Cape Flattery.⁴² At the end of March the fleet entered a safe and commodious harbor, just under the fiftieth parallel, in an indentation which Cook at first named King George's Sound, but which later was called Nootka. Here he remained till April 26. He explored the sound thoroughly, and received on board daily many natives who were eager to exchange otter skins for trinkets and baubles of every kind.⁴³ Leaving Nootka he stood to the northwest, saw a mountain which he named Mt. Edgecombe,⁴⁴ and a little later sighted Mt. St. Elias, where he crossed the path of the earlier Russian explorers on the Alaska coast. He examined every promising inlet observed on that coast, in order to settle once for all the questions of a passage into the Atlantic, in the existence of which he appears to have had but little faith. On the 9th of August Cook reached the "western extremity of all America" at what he called Cape Prince of Wales, in latitude 65 degrees 46 minutes, and longitude 191 degrees 45 minutes.

It was then too late to explore from Bering Strait eastward, and Cook proceeded to Hawaii to winter, and there met his death at the hands of the natives. The fleet returned to the north the next season, but failed to find the passage around America.

Cook's voyage was performed too late to give Great Britain the strongest claim upon the territory explored; yet in every particular except priority in time his exploration must be allowed to possess a superiority over those of the Spaniards Perez, Heceta, and Bodega. His work was much more thorough, especially between 42 degrees and 44 degrees, and again from 47 degrees north, than theirs had been; and his reports gave to the world its first definite knowledge of the geography of the Oregon coast. But more than all, Cook's voyage was the logical culmination of a long continued maritime and trade policy,⁴⁵ which was raising the British nation to ever higher planes of commercial greatness, while the Spanish voyages were the despairing effort of a declining power to save itself by a measure of expansion which it was

⁴⁰ Supra, 258 260-261.

⁴¹ Cook's Voyage. II. 263 and n.

⁴² Ibid; 263.

⁴³ Cook's Voyage, II, 270-288.

⁴⁴ The same landmark had been seen by the Spanish explorer Bodega in 1775, and was named by him *San Jacinto*.

⁴⁵ That the British navigators were perfectly aware of this fact at the time is shown by the remarks of the writer of the introduction to Cook's Voyage, London, 1784. See especially XXVII ff.

unable properly to sustain. These considerations do not, for the moment, make the British claim better or the Spanish claim worse in international law,⁴⁶ but they strongly suggest what must be the historical outcome of a conflict entered into by two nations upon such unequal terms.

II. Discovery of Puget Sound and the Columbia.

The history of exploration on the Northwest coast, after the voyage of Cook, is the record of a series of individual discoveries covering separately only local geographical features but in the aggregate serving to fill in the outline that Cook constructed. A comparison of Cook's map with a modern map of that coast will quickly reveal the most striking changes effected by the later discoveries, and our attention is at once drawn to the changes in the north.¹ Cook was unaware of any breaks in the coast line from Cape Flattery to far beyond Nootka Sound; for aught he knew it might have been a solid continental rim, without a single indentation save the insignificant ones he laid down. We at the present time know that neither Cook nor the Spanish navigators who preceded him touched or even saw the continental land mass between Cape Flattery and the Alaska coast, but that they sailed along a group of islands, the largest of which, Vancouver Island and Queen Charlotte's Island, form a barrier to the coast from the parallel of 48 degrees to above 54 degrees. These islands served to conceal from the early navigators that great inland sea which, under the names of Puget Sound, Queen Charlotte's Sound, etc., forms the most significant feature in the geography of the upper coast.

The later exploration of this region meant, essentially, the mapping of the continental shores of those seas, the straits leading into them, and the great islands by which the ocean is restrained on the west, and whose outer coasts constituted the first land seen in this region.

we have good evidence to prove that Perez, in 1774, reached the northern point of Queen Charlotte's Island, after having sailed within sight of its coast through more than a degree of latitude;²

⁴⁶ But the failure of the Spaniards to properly report their discoveries estopped them from denying the independence and originality of those made by Captain Cook.

¹ Cook's map lays down on the Northwest coast only Capes St. Gregory, Perpetua, and Foulweather in the south, and in the north Cape Flattery, Nootka Sound, Hope Bay, and Woody Point. The rest of his coast is the conventional dotted lines.

² Land was described on the 17th of July, and after standing to the north northwest for two days, an observation placed the ship at Lat. 53 degrees 41 minutes. Thence Perez sailed north northeast, and on the 22d at noon found himself in Lat. 55 degrees. Historical Society of Southern California, II, 120-121, and 124.

but he failed in an attempt to round that point.³ Bodega, in 1775, and Cook, in 1778, slipped past the point without observing it at all; indeed, both were far out at sea.⁴ So the interior waters remained undiscovered from that quarter.

The actual discovery, and the partial mapping, of this northern littoral was one of the results of an important trade movement incited by the operations of Captain Cook.⁵ We have seen that while at Nootka sound, Cook received on board numerous delegations of Indians who were eager to trade anything of value they possessed for "knives, chisels, pieces of iron and tin, nails, looking glasses, buttons, or any kind of metal." The articles they gave in exchange were various kinds of furs and skins of animals, the most interesting and significant being those of the sea-otter.⁶ Some of the furs secured in this way were sold to the Russians at Kamchatka. On reaching Canton the remainder were disposed of to Chinese merchants. They paid for the first twenty sea otter skins offered by Captain King the sum of \$800.⁷ But thereafter the price steadily went up, a few of the best skins selling for \$120 each. One seaman sold the furs he had personally collected for the sum of \$800.⁸ Though Cook's men had gathered these furs only incidentally, and had taken no pains whatever to preserve them in good condition, they received a total of about two thousand pounds for what they sold at Canton,⁹ and both officers and men became at once impressed with the possibilities of gain in a voyage to the Northwest coast for trading purposes distinctly.¹⁰

The first definite plan, so far as is known, for improving this commercial opportunity was put forth by Captain King, who in the history of Cook's voyage presents an outline of his project. He recommended that the East India Company, in their China ships, carry a number of extra men, and on their arrival at Canton fit them out with two vessels and a full supply of articles for

3 "We stood for land on an east by north course for the purpose of trying to double the point lying to the eastward of Santa Margarita (now called North Island), in order to discover whether there was anchorage ground in the coast behind that point, but the current took us so far to leeward that we were unable to fetch the point; so we stood off shore on a south south west course." Ibid., 123-4. See also 189-90, and Bancroft, N. W. C. I., 152-3 and notes. Had Perez rounded the island, he would have entered the inland sea by the present Dixon Strait.

4 See Maurelle's Journal, Cushing's Report. 44. Bodega saw land near San Jacinto, now Mt. Edgecumbe. See also Cook's Voyage, II, 341-44, especially 343-4. "At seven in the evening [May 1] being in the latitude of 55 degrees 20 minutes, we got sight of the land. . . ." This was the first sight Cook had had of the land since leaving Nootka on the evening of April 28. The land seen was a part of the Alaskan coast. He had missed Queen Charlotte's Island entirely.

A Spanish expedition of 1779 under Arteaga and Bodega ran to 55 degrees before sighting land. See Bancroft, N. W. C. I., 173.

5 Cook's Voyage, II 271.

6 Ibid., 270. Cook mentions bears, wolves, foxes, deer, raccoons, polecats, martens.

7 Ibid., III, 431.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., 437.

10 Ibid. Captain King says: "The rage with which our seamen were possessed to return to Cook's River, and by another cargo of skins to make their fortune, at one time was little short of mutiny."

trade with the Northern natives. These vessels should be required to sail along the coasts of China and Japan, in order to complete the exploration of those regions, and afterwards run to the American coast for furs. He thought that the otter skins that could be gathered incidentally, with no loss of time and at a trifling outlay of money, might be made to pay the entire cost of such a voyage.¹¹

These suggestions were not carried out, perhaps because the East India Company was not prepared to further the enterprise;¹² but at the time of the publication of his journal of Cook's voyage, 1784, Captain King apparently foresaw that the fur trade was likely to become a regular feature of British commerce, and he looked to this trade as a means of furthering exploration.¹³ That such expectations were well founded is shown by the fact that in the following year, 1785, a definite commercial project of the kind contemplated was launched at London. Mr. Richard Cadman Etches, and others, merchants of London, were the principals in the enterprise, but they enlisted the hearty support of the British ministry, and the encouragement of the leading scientific men.

Etches' plan was to establish "a regular and reciprocal system of commerce between Great Britain, the Northwest coast of America, the Japanese, Kureil and Jesso Islands, and the coast of Asia, Corea, and China,"¹⁴ Two vessels, the "King George" and the "Queen Charlotte," were equipped, placed in charge of Nathaniel Portlock and George Dixon, both of whom had been with Cook, and sent out for "discovery and commerce;" they were furnished at the same time with a number of extra seamen and artificers, stores, ammunition, provisions, etc., for the establishment of two factories, the one in King George's Sound (Nootka), and another to the northward, and for opening new commercial channels to the manufactories of Great Britain. "So satisfied were the ministry with the great and public advantages of the enterprise, with the liberal equipment and extensive arrangements of the owners, that Mr. Rose, Mr. Steele, Sir Joseph Banks, Lord Mulgrave, and a number of other distinguished and public spirited gentlemen, visited the ships at Deptford, spent the day convivially on board, and honored the expedition by christening the two ships, the officers of which were dressed in full uniform; and, as an emblem of so novel and enterprising an undertaking, Hope, leaning on an anchor, was painted on their

¹¹ Cook's Voyage, II, 437-440.

¹² Ibid, 438.

¹³ Ibid, 440.

¹⁴ *An Authentic Statement* of all the facts relative to Nootka Sound; its discovery, history, settlement, trade, and the probable advantage to be derived from it; in an address to the King. London, 1790, p. 2. "The plan was warmly applauded and patronized by the ministry, by Sir Joseph Banks, Sir John Dick, and many other personages of rank and acknowledged abilities, who rendered Mr. Etches every assistance in digesting and maturing the principal outlines of the undertaking." The above described pamphlet of only twenty-six pages, signed "*Argonaut*" is rare. From internal evidence, one would be inclined to say the author was Mr. Etches or some one authorized to speak for him. The pamphlet contains a more intimate account of the beginning of this trade project than can be derived from Portlock, Dixon, and Meares.

colors."¹⁵ A license was procured from the South Sea Company to enable the new concern¹⁶ to trade and make discoveries in their field, and another license was obtained from the East India Company for disposing of their cargoes in China.¹⁷ "The instructions, both public and private, delivered to the captains," says the above writer, "were previously submitted to your Majesty's ministers for perusal, and returned with the utmost approbation."¹⁸ These facts go to prove that we are dealing here with a project which was both private and public: private, in that it was financed by a group of merchants who hoped for a gainful trade; public, in that both the Government and the people of Great Britain were interested in the outcome of the experiment, which would determine for the North American region the commercial value of the policy of government explorations so long and so successfully pursued, and might help to complete those explorations.

The "King George" and "Queen Charlotte" sailed in September, 1785, rounded Cape Horn, and in July of the following year made Cook's River (or Cook's Inlet) in Alaska, where they were welcomed by a party of Russian traders.¹⁹ Here they collected a small quantity of furs, and then tried to make in succession Prince William's Sound, Cross Sound, and Nootka, but failed in every case; they finally ran to the Hawaiian Islands to winter, whereas it had been the intention to winter in Nootka Sound.²⁰ In March, 1787, they proceeded once more to the north, making Prince William's Sound.²¹ Here the ships separated, Dixon in the "Charlotte" standing to the east and south intending to make Nootka Sound after trading along the coast in higher latitudes.²² He visited Admiralty Bay and Norfolk Sound in Alaska; then, in prosecuting the trade further along the coast, he saw the strait between Queen Charlotte's Island, so called by him, and the continent, or rather what he erroneously supposed to be the continent. Dixon ran all along the west coast of the great island, along part of the north coast, around the south end and well up on the east side. He was thus enabled to map the island with considerable accuracy, and to fix certain definite points on the supposititious mainland to the east, Cape Pitt, Cape Chatham, and Cape Dalrymple, which outlined Dixon's Strait.²³ While his surveys left

¹⁵ Ibid. 3. For a confirmation of some of these details, and for others not given by "Argonaut," see Portlock's *Voyage*, 4-7.

¹⁶ It was called The King George's Sound Company. Portlock, 4.

¹⁷ "Argonaut" 4.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Portlock, 99-102.

²⁰ Portlock, 127.

²¹ Ibid, 206 ff.

²² Ibid, 224; and Dixon's *Voyage*, 159.

²³ See map, Dixon; also p. 224 ff. Meares denied the originality of Dixon's discovery, claiming it for Laurie and Guise. 1786. See map in Meares' *Voyages*, 1791 Ed. In the absence of other proof, however, it seems proper to accord to Dixon the credit he claimed, of "adding these islands to the geography of this part of the coast." The French navigator, La Perouse, who passed down the coast in 1786, almost made this discovery,

much to be desired in the way of thoroughness, Dixon's voyage nevertheless marked an important advance in the world's geographical knowledge of this region. Let us now see what was taking place farther to the south.

We have several times in the preceding chapter referred to the supposed straits of Juan de Fuca, which were sought for between the parallels of forty-seven and forty-eight first by Heceta and Bodega in 1775, and again by Cook in 1778. The story that incited eighteenth century navigators to such investigations is one of the most curious in the history of exploration. It was first published by Samuel Purchas in his "Pilgrimage," edition of 1625. The story²³ is to the effect that De Fuca, a Greek, who was at that time in the service of the viceroy of New Spain, sailed from Mexico in the year 1592 with one small caravel for the discovery of the Straits of Anian and through them the North Sea or Atlantic. De Fuca proceeded northward till he came to latitude forty-seven, and then, "finding that the land trended north and northeast, with a broad inlet of sea between 47 and 48 degrees of latitude, he entered thereinto, sailing thence more than twenty days, and found that land trending still sometime north west, and north east, and north, and also east and south eastward, and very much broader sea than was at the said entrance, and that he passed by divers islands in that sailing; and that, at the entrance of this said strait, there is, on the northwest coast thereof a great headland or island, with an exceeding high pinnacle or spired rock, like a pillar, thereon." He claimed to have sailed through this strait to the Atlantic and back again to Mexico, where, as also in Spain, he failed of the reward which he surely expected for this notable service, and therefore he was prepared to strike a bargain with the British, who were at that time keenly anxious to find just such a strait. It is not necessary to dwell on the probabilities and improbabilities of this story. The interesting fact is that it strongly influenced the course of later exploration, and that the strait laid down on the west coast of America on the basis of this report proved to be, after all, only one degree south of the extremely important waterway in whose modern designation the old Greek pilot is vouchsafed a kind of immortality which he may not altogether deserve.

When Portlock and Dixon reached the Alaska coast in May, 1787, they found in Prince William's Sound a ship called the "Nootka," commanded by Captain John Meares. Meares was

but not quite. See his *Voyage*, 3d Eng. Ed., London 1807, 154 ff.; also Bancroft, N. W. C. L., 175.

²³ Vol. III, p. 849, as cited by Greenhow, Ore. and Cal., 1845 Ed., 409. The story does not appear in the 1614 edition of Purchas, which is before me. The authority is Michael Lock, an Englishman engaged in the Levant trade, who was a friend of Richard Hakluyt. Lock claims to have met De Fuca at Venice in the year 1596, and to have obtained the facts from him directly. Lock tried on several occasions to induce De Fuca to go to England and take service under the Queen, but always failed because he was never quite prepared to satisfy the Greek's pecuniary demands. De Fuca claimed to have been in the Spanish ship captured and looted by Cavendish in 1787, and to have sustained heavy losses for which he required to be reimbursed. See the relation of Lock, and the correspondence between him and De Fuca in Greenhow, *supra*, 409 ff.; also 88-9.

an English naval officer on leave, who had sailed from India in March, 1786, reaching Alaska just before winter.²⁴ Later, it was learned that other ships, from Macao in China, and from Ostend, had been upon the coast²⁵ in the years 1786 and 1787. One of these, the "Imperial Eagle," or the "Loudoun," commanded by an Englishman named Barclay, sailed from Nootka in July, 1787, and discovered a passage between Cape Flattery and the land he had just left, which was of course Vancouver Island, whose insular character was not at that time known. Barclay did not enter the strait or give it a name.²⁶ In the following year Meares, who was now in general command of several vessels belonging to a company resulting from a merger of the Etches concern with the one formerly represented by Meares, ordered an exploration to be made of the strait Barclay had found.²⁷ In consequence it was entered by Robert Duffin on the 16th of July, 1788, and traced for the distance of at least three or four leagues, possibly more.²⁸ We also have it on the authority of Meares that in the year 1789 the American sloop "Washington," commanded by J. Kendrick, entered the strait, of which Meares had told him, and sailed entirely around Vancouver and Queen Charlotte's islands, proving that Nootka Sound was not an indentation on the mainland, and establishing the fact of the existence in this northern region of a great archipelago.²⁹ While this discovery was never claimed by Kendrick, so far as is known, and while it is not as well authenticated as we could wish, yet there are reasons for believing that it was actually made. At least one is at a loss to know how Meares could have constructed the map which accompanies his edition of 1789 without some such information as he says he received from one of Kendrick's men.³⁰

24 Meares' *Voyages* I, Intro.; also Portlock, 218. The Nootka had as consort the *Sea-Otter*, commanded by William Tipping, also an officer of the Royal navy. These ships were owned by British merchants in India, who operated under the protection of the East India Company. See Meares' Memorial. *Voyages*, Ap.

25 Dixon, 230-233. James Hanna seems to have been the first trader on the coast, making his first voyage from China in 1785. Supra, 232, Meares, II, 252 ff., and Bancroft, N. W. C. I., 173.

26 See letters of John Charles Barclay to Lord Aberdeen, January 2 and January 16, 1846. He says: "The ship which my father [Capt. Barclay] commanded [on the N. W. coast in 1787] was *bona fide* an English vessel fitted out (I believe) in a British port, and manned with British sailors." Says the ship was *The Loudoun*. Letter found in Foreign Office America, 459.

27 This discovery was communicated to Meares, who mentions it in *Voyages*, II, 258.

28 Meares, III, Ap. Instructions to Robert Duffin. Meares called it "the Strait of John De Fuca." He says to Duffin: "You will enter this strait as far as you find any inhabitants, or prospect of furs."

29 Duffin's Journal extract, in Meares, *Voyages*, Ap. No. IV.

30 Meares, II, 260 ff. After sailing through the strait, he says, the Washington "entered into an extensive sea, where she steered to the northward and eastward, and had communication with the various tribes who inhabit the shores of the numerous islands that are situated at the back of Nootka Sound.... The sea also, which is seen to the east is of great extent." Meares was trying to derive from this voyage evidence to prove the probability of a passage to or near Hudson's Bay from this part of the Pacific.

We have now reached the time when Spain and Great Britain come into conflict over the question of their respective rights on the Northwest coast. Fortunately, the entire history of this struggle has recently been worked out with great elaboration of detail,³¹ so that, for the purposes of this paper we need not be detained long by it. The main point is that Spain, finding that Nootka Sound was become a place of rendezvous for British trading vessels, and fearing lest her own claims of sovereignty over the region should suffer in consequence, resolved to fortify Nootka Sound and exclude all foreigners from the coast. For this purpose she sent warships from Mexico in 1789, whose commander, Don Martinez, siezed several of the ships belonging to the British company and sent them to Mexico. The two governments thereupon entered into a correspondence which seemed likely at one time to be abruptly terminated by war. In the end, however, the Spaniards were forced to admit the rights of the British to trade upon the Northwest coast, and to occupy any portions of the same not already occupied "for the purpose of carrying on their commerce with the natives of the country, or of making establishments there." It was also stipulated that British subjects should not carry on their navigation or fisheries within the distance of ten marine leagues from any place on the coast already occupied by Spain, which was intended as a protection to the infant establishments in California.³² These were of much greater interest to Spain than was the barren stretch of coast from California to Alaska, of which she could never make an effective use. It may be remarked here that after the settlement of the Nootka difficulty, Spain promptly retired to California and ended, once for all, her career on the Northwest coast. "It (the Nootka Convention) was the first express renunciation of Spain's ancient claim to exclusive sovereignty over the American shores of the Pacific Ocean and the South Seas."³³ But for Britain and for America the controversy had far more significant results, as the following pages will show.

There was still one point with reference to northern geography which interested the Spaniards, namely, the possibility of the existence of a passage to the Atlantic by way of Fuca's Strait. It was to satisfy themselves on this head, that, in the years 1790, 1791, and 1792 expeditions were sent out from Mexico to survey these waters.³⁴ The results of some of their explorations were very important. Quimper, in 1790, carefully mapped Fuca's Strait to the Canal de Haro; the next year Eliza continued the examination of Canal de Haro, extending his observations northward into Rosario Straits; and in 1792 Galleno and Valdez passed entirely around Vancouver's Island, surveying and mapping it with great care.³⁵

31 See Manning, William Ray, *The Nootka Sound Controversy*. Am. Hist. Assn. An. Rept., 1904, 279-478.

32 See the Nootka Convention. Manning, 455.

33 Ibid, 462.

34 Bancroft. N. W. C. I., 273.

35 Ibid, 240-43; 244-48; also *Papers Relating to the Treaty of Washington*, V, Berlin Arbitration, 88-98. This contains a short account of Quimper's voyage, extracts from the journal of Eliza's voyage, and more extended extracts from the report of the voyage of Galleno and Valdez.

In the events which brought the English navigator, Captain George Vancouver, to the Northwest coast at this time, we have one more proof of the intimate relation, the action and reaction, between trade and exploration as features of British policy. It was the reports and maps of the voyages of British traders, like Portlock, Dixon, and Meares, which proved the existence of an archipelago where Cook had found no break in the coast line, that stimulated the Government to make one more careful search for the long-sought passage.³⁶ The instructions issued to Vancouver by the Admiralty bring out this point in a striking manner: "The King having judged it expedient that an expedition should be undertaken for acquiring a more complete knowledge than has yet been obtained, of the Northwest coast of America; . . . you are . . . [after surveying the Sandwich Islands] to repair to the North-west coast of America, for the purpose of acquiring a more complete knowledge of it, as above mentioned." Vancouver was instructed to examine that coast between the parallels of thirty and sixty degrees, with two main objects in view: "1st, The acquiring accurate information with respect to the nature and extent of any water communication which may tend, in any considerable degree, to facilitate an intercourse for the purposes of commerce, between the North-west coast, and the country [countries] on the opposite side of the continent which are inhabited or occupied by His Majesty's subjects.

"2d ly, The ascertaining, with as much precision as possible, the number, extent, and situation of any settlements which have been made within the limits above mentioned by any European nation, and the time when such settlement was first made."

In carrying out his instructions under the first head, which was emphatically spoken of as the principal object of the expedition, Vancouver was required to ascertain not alone the general course of the coast line, "but also the direction and extent of all such considerable inlets, whether made by arms of the sea or by the mouths of large rivers, as may be likely to lead to or facilitate, such communication as is above described. . . .

"The particular course of the survey must depend on the different circumstances which may arise in the execution of a service of this nature; it is, however, proper that you should, and you are therefore hereby directed to pay a particular attention to the examination of the supposed straits of Juan de Fuca, said to be situated between 48 degrees and 49 degrees north latitude, and to lead to an opening through which the sloop Washington is reported to have passed in the year 1789, and to have come out again to the northward of Nootka. The discovery of a near communication between any such sea or strait, and any river running into or from the lake of the Woods would be particularly useful."³⁷

³⁶ Vancouver's Voyage, Ed. of 1801, I, 40-41. "The favorite opinion that had slept since the publication of Captain Cook's last voyage," says Vancouver "of a northeastern communication between the waters of the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, was again roused from its state of slumber and brought forward with renovated vigor. Once more the Archipelago of St. Lazarus was called forth into being, and its existence almost assumed. . . . The straits said to have been navigated by Juan de Fuca were also brought forward in support of this opinion."

³⁷ Vancouver's Voyage, I, 58-67.

Having shown what Vancouver was expected to do, it will not be necessary to describe his work in detail, but only to add that he executed his orders with the utmost fidelity and success, devoting three summers to the service and giving to the world a great map of the west coast of America from San Diego in California to Cook's River in Alaska. Vancouver named Puget Sound for Lieutenant Puget, and he gave their modern designations to nearly all the most striking natural objects in that vicinity—the numerous canals between Fuca's Strait and Norfolk Sound, the islands, aside from a few that had been named by their commercial discoverers or by the Spaniards, and the mountain peaks discernible from different points in this labyrinth of waters. At many points Vancouver was preceded by the Spaniards, who, as we have seen, made a careful survey of Fuca's Strait and the waters reached from it in 1790, 91, and 92. Nevertheless, he added materially to their work in this region, and connected into one great system all that had been done previously and all that he was enabled to do himself.³⁸

Just above the parallel of 46 degrees Vancouver lays down on his map an inlet, traced for about one hundred miles from the sea, which he calls "The River Columbia." The significance attaching to this feature of Northwest geography would in itself justify a somewhat detailed account of its discovery; but when we recall that this was the first memorable act performed by our own countrymen in the drama of western maritime exploration we have an additional reason for lingering over the incident.

The origin of the American interest in the fur trade of the Northwest coast is not known with as much definiteness as we could wish. It seems clear, however, that, as in the cases of the British merchants of London, Bombay, and China, the general inciting cause was Cook's voyage and the report of the sale of furs by Cook's men in Canton. The story of John Ledyard's connection with Cook's expedition, his return home to Connecticut after its completion, his publication of an account of the voyage, and his enthusiastic but futile attempts to enlist New York, Philadelphia, and Boston merchants in the fur trade of the Northwest coast and China has been frequently told and need not be repeated here.³⁹ It is reasonable to suppose that Ledyard's representations in the years 1783 and 1784 were not at once forgotten, and that they may have exerted some influence at a later time toward inducing a group of Boston merchants to fit out ships for this trade. But we have no positive evidence on the point, and it is equally probable that the recital in Cook's narrative itself, or rumors of the interest in this trade in England and elsewhere, constituted the moving cause. An account of the origin of the trading movement at Boston was published

³⁸ See coast map, *Ibid.*

³⁹ See Schafer, *The Pacific Northwest*, 33-37. The source is Sparks's *Life of John Ledyard*, Chap. VI.

there in 1866.⁴⁰ Of contemporaneous evidence we have nothing that gives an intimate account of the origin of the enterprise; but in the *Boston Centinel* of September, 1787, and the *American Herald* (Boston), September 30 of the same year, there appears the following notice: "Silver and copper medals, we are told, are striking off, to be carried by Captain Kendrick, bound to the Pacific Ocean, to be distributed among the natives of the Indian Isles." The description of these well known medals follows. The article continues: "The enterprising adventurers on the voyage to New Albion, are determined to send in their vessels a quantity of the copper cents and half cents, struck at the public mint under the authority of this commonwealth, to be disposed of among the natives of those coasts they may visit in the southern ocean. They are finely executed, the device on one side the spread eagle of the Union encircled with the word Commonwealth—on the other an Indian, with his bow and arrow, surrounded with the word Massachusetts." The *Centinel* also, in the same issue, notes the clearing of the ship "Columbia," Captain Kendrick, bound for New Albion.

This is all that the papers give. The enterprise seems to have excited little public interest, or else the intensity of the political agitation, the necessity of discussing all phases of the proposed new constitution, the long letters on government by Doctor John Adams and others, left no opportunity to properly record such interest as there was.⁴¹

Very different was the reception accorded the Columbia on her return to Boston August 9, 1790, after completing her voyage round the world.⁴² Then the people crowded the wharves and sent their loud "Huzzas" ringing across the waters of the bay to cheer the homecomers; while the *Boston Centinel*, in a leading editorial, voiced the public gratification at the success achieved by the adventurous merchants, who had inaugurated a new branch of commerce for America.⁴³

⁴⁰ *Oregon and El Dorado*, by Thomas Bulfinch. In the opening pages of the book he professes to describe the origin of the plan to send ships from Boston to the Northwest coast and China. He begins with an account of a meeting which occurred at the mansion of Dr. Bulfinch (possibly the author's ancestor) in the year 1787. Among those present were Charles Bulfinch and Joseph Barrell, the former a son of Dr. Bulfinch, the latter "an eminent merchant of Boston. The conversation turned upon the topic of the day—the voyage of Captain Cook, the account of which had just been published.... (But this account had been published three years before, and the newspapers afford no support for the statement that this was the "topic of the day" in 1787.) At last it changed, and turned more upon the commercial aspects of the subject. Mr. Barrell was particularly struck with what Cook relates of the abundance of valuable furs offered by the natives of the country in exchange for beads, knives, and other trifling commodities valued by them. The remark of Captain Cook respecting the sea-otter was cited.... Mr. Barrell remarked, 'There is a rich harvest to be reaped there by those who will first go in.' This conversation led, he says to the formation of the company and the sending of the ships *Columbia* and *Washington*. The narrative must be used with caution, for it appears to be constructed out of loose traditions rather than trustworthy sources.

⁴¹ Haswell's *Journals*, Bancroft N. W. C. I., Ap., gives an account of the circumstances of the Columbia's departure from Boston Harbor.

⁴² For an account of the proceedings of the Columbia and her consort on the Northwest coast, 1788-1789, see Bancroft. N. W. C. I., 185-92; 204-9; also Haswell, *Ibid.*, Ap.

⁴³ *Columbia Centinel*, Aug. 11, 1790; p. 3, c. 1. Editorial headed The

The Columbia sailed a second time from Boston September 28, 1790,⁴⁴ and reached the Northwest coast in June of the following year. After a summer spent in trade, and a winter in making new and more complete arrangements for the trade of 1792,⁴⁵ Gray sailed from Clayoquot early in April for a cruise in the south. On the 29th of April he met Vancouver, to whom he gave some account of his doings up to that time.

Running still further south, Gray on the 7th of May entered a harbor in latitude 46 degrees 58 minutes, which he named "Bulfinch Harbor," but which Vancouver later in the year named Gray's Harbor, its present designation. Four days later, May 11, Gray ran in between the breakers into what he at first supposed to be another harbor. He says, however: "When we were over the bar we found this to be a large river of fresh water, up which we steered.... The entrance between the bars bore west-

Columbia: "It is with real pleasure we announce the safe arrival, in this port on Monday last, of the ship Columbia, Capt. Gray from a voyage of adventure on the North West Coast of America.

"This ship, in company with the sloop Washington, sailed on the 30th September, 1787, and the year following reached their destination; from whence the Columbia sailed with furs, which she disposed of in China on her way home.

"To Messrs. Barrell, Brown, Bulfinch, Hatch, Derby, and Pintard, who planned the voyage, their country is indebted, for this experiment in a branch of commerce before unessayed by Americans; and to their care in providing every necessary comfort and convenience of the crews, may, under Heaven, be attributed the extraordinary degree of health which they have enjoyed; having lost but one man by sickness, since they sailed.

"Their country is also under obligation to the intrepid navigators who have conducted the voyage—whose urbanity and civility have secured the friendship of the aboriginals of the country they visited; and whose honor and intrepidity have commanded the protection and respect of the European *Lords of the soil* [Spaniards] to the American flag; while that of another nation [Britain] has been forbidden to be unfurled on the coast.

"The Columbia and Washington are the first American vessels who have circumnavigated the globe—and the Washington which is only of 90 tons burthen, is the first sloop of any nation ever sent on so great a voyage.

"On the Columbia's arriving opposite the castle, she saluted the flag of the United States with 10 guns; which was immediately returned therefrom—and on coming to her moorings in the harbor fired a federal salute—which a great concourse of people assembled on the several wharfs returned with three huzzas and a hearty welcome. We are told that one of the natives of Owyhee arrived in the Columbia."

"An officer on board the Columbia has favored us with the following nautical memorandum, viz: The ship Columbia, sailed Sept. 30th, 1787, from Boston, and arrived at St. Jago's, Nov. 16, 1787—the distance 4124 miles. Dec. 12, 1787, sailed from St. Jago's, and arrived at Falkland Islands Feb. 16, 1788—dist. 4888 miles. Feb. 29, 1788, sailed from Falkland Islands, and arrived at Juan Fernandez May 24, 1788—dist. 5349 miles. June 6, 1788 sailed from Juan Fernandez, and arrived at Nootka Sound Sept. 23, 1788—dist. 7457 miles. July 30, 1789, sailed from Nootka Sound, and arrived at Canton, Nov. 16, 1789—dist. 8446 miles. Feb. 12th, 1790, sailed from Canton and made Ascention Island June 24, 1790—dist. 11,625 miles. June 24, 1790, sailed from Ascention Island, and arrived at Boston Aug. 9th, 1790—dist. (computed by the editor, as it was omitted from the journal) 7000 miles. Total number of miles, 48 889! The Columbia stopped at the Sandwich Islands for provisions 24 days, arrived Aug. 24, 1789—and two days at St. Helena's for water and refreshment."

Journal Extracts: The Iphigenia and a schooner sailed from Nootka Oct. 26, 1788, etc. (account of various arrivals and departures at Nootka from Oct., 1788, to July 12, 1789. Of the capture of the English vessels, etc.)

⁴⁴ Col. Centinel, Sept. 29, 1790.

⁴⁵ By building the sloop *Adventure*, and fitting her for an independent cruise. See Haswell.

south-west, distance ten miles; the north side of the river half a mile distant from the ship; the south side of the same two and a half miles distant; a village on the north side of the river west by north, distant three-quarters of a mile. Vast numbers of natives came alongside; people employed in pumping the salt water out of our water casks so as to fill with fresh, while the ship floated in."⁴⁶ Such is the original account of the discovery and first entrance of the Columbia River, extracted from Gray's log-book, under the date⁴⁷ of May 11, 1792. We have also some account from the same source of Gray's doings in the river between the eleventh and twentieth of May. On the fourteenth Gray set sail and ran "twelve or fifteen miles" further up the stream, but finding the channel he was in to be very narrow and apparently dangerous, he anchored again. He spent some time viewing the country on shore, and continued his trade with the natives, which of course was his sole object in entering the river. On the 19th he gave the river its name, calling it not Columbia, but "Columbia's" River, for his ship. The northern cape he called "Hancock,"⁴⁸ the southern "Point Adams." Next day, May 20th, he sailed out over the bar.

Vancouver at Puget Sound learned about Gray's discovery, and determining upon an investigation, sailed in October with both his vessels, the "Discovery" and the "Chatham" to the mouth of the river. He would not venture to take the larger vessel in; but Lieutenant Broughton, with the Chatham, crossed the bar and anchored within the river. He then explored it in a cutter to the distance of about one hundred miles, or to the head of navigation. He took possession "for the King at this place, which he named Point Vancouver."⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Vancouver, II, 40 ff.

⁴⁷ This extract from Gray's log-book was made by Charles Bulfinch. See Greenhow, Ore. and Cal., 1845 Ed., 434.

⁴⁸ Meares on the 6th of July 1788, had named this point *Cape Deception*. (*Voyages*, 167.) He expected to find, by rounding it, a good harbor, but seeing the dangerous line of breakers across the entrance he called it *Deception Bay*. Having gazed upon the indentation from his ship, Meares says (*Voyages*, 168): "We can now with safety assert that no such river as St. Roc exists, as laid down on Spanish charts."

⁴⁹ Vancouver's *Voyage*, II 386 ff.; also III, 85 ff., which is Broughton's account of the Columbia and his survey of the river.

Broughton and Vancouver do Gray the injustice of denying that he had ever entered the river proper, contending that he only saw and entered the estuary, or inlet. Yet it was Gray's chart of the river that served Broughton for a guide in taking the Chatham over the bar! Moreover, Vancouver had fully convinced himself, in sailing up the coast in April, that there was no river of any consequence, or any safe harbor for shipping at the point where Gray found the river. See his remarkable statement so often quoted, in *Voyages*, II, 386 ff. The essential part is quoted in Schafer, Pacific Northwest 42.

III. Exploration of an Overland Route to Oregon.

One feature of instructions issued by the Board of Admiralty to Vancouver in 1791, seems to be significant in connection with the subject of the present chapter. He was required not simply to seek for a continuous passage through the continent of North America, but also for "any water communication which [might] tend in any considerable degree to facilitate an intercourse for the purposes of commerce" between the Pacific and the Atlantic; and the injunction was laid upon him to search particularly from Fuca's strait and the sea reported to lie east of it, because "The discovery of a near communication between any such sea or strait, and any river running into or from the lake of the woods would be particularly useful." In these clauses we find an obvious deviation from or enlargement of the conception which had controlled the earlier British exploring policy. The voyagers to Hudson Bay had been expected to find a passage round North America to the Pacific; Cook, in 1776, had been sent out to search for "A northern passage by sea from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean . . . ;" but Vancouver's instructions are, in effect, to try to find a line of easy communication between the two coasts, whether wholly or only in part by water. In other words, with the British Government, the search for "The Passage" is shading off into a search for an overland route.

This is a perfectly natural evolution in policy. For, during the interval between Cook and Vancouver, in which so much was done to determine the geography of the Northwest coast, much had been done, also, toward a general exploration of the inland regions of the north. The travels of Samuel Hearne had already brought out the fact that the country stretching west from Hudson Bay was of vast extent.¹ French traders, like Verendrye, and later, British, American, and Scotch traders had added much to the knowledge men had of the country both west and southwest. They had even exaggerated the magnificent distances of those all but boundless plains, making it appear that points already fixed in the interior could not be far removed from points in the corresponding latitudes which, by Cook's scientific labors, had been established on the west coast. Indeed, it would appear from Peter Pond's map of the western parts of North America, executed in the year 1785, that what we know as the Assiniboin River had its source at least as far west as the meridian of 125 degrees, and only about two degrees of latitude north of Nootka Sound, placed in about longitude 126 degrees and represented as extending northward indefinitely. One is prone to imagine that the writer of Vancouver's instructions was glancing at Pond's map while penning the clause above quoted about a "river running into or from the lake of the woods," and emphasizing the utility of discovering a connection from the sea coast with such a river.² In any event, since the knowledge of interior North

¹ Hearne had discovered a lake which he called *Athapapuskow*; this would seem to be the present Great Slave Lake instead of, as the name suggests, Athabasca. See Bryce, George, *Mackenzie, Selkirk, and Simpson*, 3.

² See Pond's map as reproduced in Brymner. Canadian Archives. Report for 1890. This map was communicated to Governor Hamilton in 1785. *Ibid.*, XXV.

American geography possessed by the Board of Admiralty was all derived in some way from the reports of the fur traders, we have revealed in Vancouver's instructions influences derived from both of those widely severed branches of British commerce, the Northwest coast fur trade and the interior fur trade.

On the other hand, the exploring activities of the British traders of the interior of North America were, after 1784, greatly stimulated, and their character and direction influenced, by Cook's reports. By that time the fur trade of Canada, which had been partly disorganized after the close of the French regime, with the inrush of British, American, and Scotch traders had again become systematized through the organization in 1783 of the Northwest Company at Montreal.³ At once thereafter we have schemes of exploration which in no long time are to result in a great extension of geographical knowledge relative to the northern and western portions of North America.

In October, 1784, the brothers Benjamin and Joseph Frobisher, founders of the Northwest Company, made the important announcement to Governor Haldimand that their company proposed to send out an expedition to explore the country west of Hudson Bay to the Pacific Ocean. They agreed to have surveys made and notes taken respecting the territory to be traversed, which was the region between 55 degrees and 65 degrees, and to lay full reports before the Canadian Government. In return they asked an exclusive right of trade, for ten years, through the country to be opened by their labors.⁴ The person who had done most toward conducting previous explorations for the company was Peter Pond, whose map we have already referred to. Pond was an American by birth, but he had been engaged in the Canadian fur trade for a number of years, and was destined to win an evil renown for the brutal violence of his methods in that trade.⁵ In April, 1785, he sent a memorial to Governor Hamilton to support the Frobisher memorial of a few months earlier. Pond asserts, as an argument to induce the Government to grant the concessions desired, that he has positive knowledge "from the natives who have been on the coast of the North Pacific Ocean, that there (was) a trading post already established by the Russians," which was of course true as respects Alaska; and he adds: "Your memorialist is credibly informed that ships are now fitting out from the United States of America, under the command of

³ The best general source for the fur trade of Canada during the last forty years of the eighteenth century is Masson, L. R., *Les Burgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*, 2v. Quebec, 1889-90. See also Mackenzie, Alex., *Voyages* London, 1801, I, CXXIX; and Brymner. Canadian Archives. Reports for 1888, 1889, and 1890.

⁴ Brymner. Canadian Archives. Rept. for 1890, 48-9. In connection with this paper the Frobishers lay before Governor Haldimand a brief account of the history of the Canadian fur trade since the conquest of the country by Britain. Ibid, 50-52.

⁵ Pond is described by Gov. Hamilton as a man who "has long indulged a passion for making discoveries—being qualified by an excellent constitution to endure the fatigues and an active mind to encounter the many difficulties that naturally occur in the prosecution of such pursuits." Can. Arch. 1890, XXV. His wickedness is portrayed in Bryce, *Mackenzie*, etc., 6, 10, 15, 21; also, Masson, I, 15 ff.

able seamen (who accompanied Captain Cook in his last voyage) in order to establish a fur trade on the North West Coast of North America, at or near Prince Williams' Sound...."⁶

The plans of the company were not carried out at once, for the Government showed little inclination to grant the large concessions demanded. But four years later, Alexander Mackenzie, the virile and resourceful young Highlander who was sent to the Athabasca country in 1787 to succeed the vicious Peter Pond, began, largely on his own responsibility, a series of the most remarkable explorations of which the world has any record.⁷ On the 3d of June, 1789, Mackenzie embarked at Fort Chipewyan, on Lake Athabasca, in a canoe with an Indian guide and a few French voyageurs, and made his way to Great Slave Lake. Here he entered a river, already vaguely known from Indian report, which flowed to the northwest, and in just forty days from the time of setting out, reached tidewater near the Arctic Ocean in latitude 65 degrees 7 minutes. Mackenzie saw there, under the midn.ight sun of July, great fields of ice, and in the open spaces scores of spouting whales.⁸ He had traced to its delta the longest of the north-flowing rivers, which very appropriately bears the explorer's name. By this voyage he had effectually proven that no passage existed in the far northern latitudes; for he had traced the firm land from 58 degrees 40 minutes to above 69 degrees, and that it ran still further north was shown by the course of a snowy mountain range in the west, which stretched north as far as eye could see.⁹

Three years later, Mackenzie, having meantime spent a winter in London to perfect his knowledge of the use of astronomical instruments, entered upon his second and greatest exploring venture. This was nothing less than a projected journey from his station on Lake Athabasca to the Pacific Ocean, now known to be nearly a thousand miles in a straight line to the westward, and not a short distance merely as represented by Pond and other geographers.¹⁰ Mackenzie proposed to reach the Pacific by ascending Peace River, and crossing from its source to the nearest connecting waters on the west side of the Rocky Mountains. This feat he actually accomplished, in the space of about eleven months, overcoming difficulties which it would be almost impossible to exaggerate. He left Fort Chipewyan October 10, 1792, and ascended Peace River to a point near the foot of the mountains, where he spent the winter.¹¹ On the 9th of May 1793,

⁶ Can. Arch. 1890, 53. Pond must refer here to Ledyard and his scheme to open a fur trade on the Northwest coast. This shows that Ledyard's project created some stir among traders, although it did not in the end succeed.

⁷ A delightful brief biography of Mackenzie is that by George Bryce in the *Makers of Canada Series*, v. 9 Mackenzie, Selkirk, and Simpson. The source for Mackenzie's explorations is his *Voyages*.

⁸ *Voyages*, 59-61, 62 ff.

⁹ *Voyages*, 53-4.

¹⁰ Through the importunity of the British Government, the Hudson's Bay Company had sent out, in 1791, an astronomer named Philip Turner. He definitely determined the longitude of Fort Chipewyan. By comparing with Cook's observations in the same latitude, the distance to the west coast could now be readily computed. Bryce, Mackenzie, etc., 57.

¹¹ *Voyages*, 121 ff.

the great journey was resumed. The party consisted of only ten men, including the leader and his faithful friend and lieutenant, Alexander Mackay.¹² They crossed the mountains, and on the 12th of June reached a navigable river flowing south-westward. This stream they descended for twenty-five days; but they found it so treacherous and difficult as to be almost impracticable; moreover, its course became so prevailingly southward as to suggest a very indirect route to the Pacific. Therefore, on the advice of some of the natives living along this river, Mackenzie turned off at a point in about latitude 53 degrees and took an overland trail which brought him to a small westward-flowing river. By this stream the adventurous party reached the Pacific in latitude 52 degrees 20 minutes, at a place which had recently been surveyed by Captain Vancouver and called "Cascade Canal." Mackenzie found the coast Indians so troublesome that it became unsafe to remain among them, and he accordingly set out on the return journey the very next day.¹³ By the 24th of August the party was back across the mountains at the upper fort on Peace River.¹⁴

Mackenzie supposed that the great river he had traced for so many dreary days was that mysterious "River of the West" which cartographers were wont to lay down, at a venture, upon their maps.¹⁵ The Indians called it "Tacoutche Tesse," which is the name given it by Mackenzie on his map; but below the point where his party turned off, he continues the representation of the river by a dotted line and identifies it with the Columbia.¹⁶ We now know that Mackenzie crossed the mountains too far north to strike the heads of the Columbia, and that the river he partly explored, under such peculiar difficulties, was in reality the Frazer River, which flows into the "inland sea" just above the forty-ninth parallel. Before this fact was determined, however, the Columbia itself had been reached from another quarter by its American explorers, who demonstrated that here, rather than in the far north, was nature's highway to the Pacific.

* * * * *

In the history of the exploration of the Pacific Northwest, the conscious point of entrance of the American nation is at the Lewis and Clark expedition. Gray's discovery of the Columbia, while important in its later effects as affording a catchy argument on which to base the American claim to the territory drained by the river, had no particular significance in itself. Gray was

¹² Mackay became a leading partner in Astor's American Fur Company, and lost his life in the Tonquin disaster of 1811.

¹³ Before leaving the vicinity of the coast, Mackenzie "mixed up some vermilion in melted grease, and inscribed, in large characters, on the south-east face of the rock on which we had slept last night this brief memorial—ALEXANDER MACKENZIE FROM CANADA, BY LAND THE TWENTY-SECOND OF JULY, ONE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED AND NINETY-THREE." *Voyages*, 349.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 396-7.

¹⁵ See, for example, Carver's map as reproduced in Schafer, *The Pacific Northwest*, p. 47.

¹⁶ Before Mackenzie published his book and map, in 1801, Vancouver's map had been published (1798), which of course suggested the identity of the Tacoutche Tesse and the Columbia.

not engaged in making discoveries.¹⁷ He entered the Columbia just as he had previously entered Fuca's strait, Gray's harbor, and probably scores of other inlets, for the sole purpose of trading with the natives, among whom the last found always best served the trader's interests. He took no special pains to explore the river after entering it, to claim the territory on returning home.¹⁸ The whole matter was a purely fortuitous circumstance, which, like so many historical accidents, has had notable results. But the Lewis and Clark expedition is an event of a very different order, representing, like the British voyages of exploration in the Pacific, a logical national policy demanded by the highest regard for the national honor and welfare. Since both the conception and the execution of this policy are due most largely to Thomas Jefferson, the genesis of the Lewis and Clark expedition can be studied best in the life and works of this great statesman of the early national period.

Jefferson's interest in the West had two sources, environment and philosophy, between which it is difficult to draw a sharp line of distinction. We know that his home, during the period in which Jefferson was growing to manhood, was practically on the frontier, his father having been, as he tells us, the third or fourth settler in that part of Virginia (the Piedmont region) in about the year 1737.¹⁹ It is a natural inference that this fact is partly responsible for Jefferson's instinctive appreciation of Western men and Western conditions; nor can we doubt that it contributed something to stimulate his interest in the merely curious features of that vast territory which was still so inadequately known.²⁰ But, on the other hand, Jefferson was the type of the eighteenth century savant, passionately fond of knowl-

¹⁷ Americans have been disposed to contend that Gray was a discoverer or explorer of equal status with the British traders Portlock, Dixon, and Meares; but there are two reasons for declining to accept this view. First, we have seen that exploration was an avowed object of the Etches Company, as well as trade; second, these voyagers kept regular journals which were promptly published, together with maps showing their discoveries. In a sense, also, the British Government had commissioned these men to make explorations in the Pacific.

¹⁸ Gray's return to Boston at the end of July, 1793, unlike his return in 1790, created no newspaper comment whatever. The *Columbia Centinel*, July 31, merely notes: "Captain Gray, of the ship *Columbia*, arrived here from China—spoke, July 5—sloop *Sally*," etc.

Mr. Prevost, sent to the Columbia in 1818 to take possession of Astoria, says in his report, *Am. St. Pap., For. Rel. IV, 805*: "I have taken the liberty to enclose a note marked E, of the authorities, Spanish as well as English, that have fallen under my view. Illustrating the discovery of the Columbia by Mr. Gray in 1791. Its subsequent occupation, in 1811, by which the sovereignty of the United States was completed to the exclusion of any European claimant, is a fact of which the surrender of the sole establishment on the river [Oct. 18, 1818] is conclusive evidence." Bulfinch made the extract from Gray's log-book in 1818. This, unquestionably, was the time at which Gray's discovery was first brought to the attention of the Government and the public.

¹⁹ Jefferson's Writings, Ford's Ed., I, 3.

²⁰ As Governor of Virginia, including Kentucky, Jefferson was compelled to interest himself in the Western people, and that he did so most heartily is evidenced by many examples from his writings. See II, 64-6, 240-41, 256, 257, 345, and *passim*.

edge and eagerly pursuing it, whatever its form or relative utility.²¹

Taking up Jefferson's famous book, "The Notes on Virginia,"²² written in the years 1781 and 1782, we see at once that he knew everything that had then been found out relative to the trans-Alleghany region. He discusses its flora, its fauna, even speaks of the leau mines of far-off Galena,²³ the wide distribution of coal measures,²⁴ and those extraordinary deposits near the Ohio of bones of huge, extinct animals.²⁵ Our chief concern, however, is his ideas of Western geography, and particularly those features of it which point in the direction of the explorations he afterward set on foot.

Speaking of Western rivers, Jefferson says:²⁶ "The Missouri, since the treaty of Paris, the Illinois and northern branches of the Ohio since the cession to Congress, are no longer within our limits. Yet, having been so heretofore, and still opening to us channels of extensive communication with the Western and Northwestern country, they shall be noted in their order.

"The Missouri is in fact the principal river, contributing more to the common stream than does the Missisipi, even after its junction with the Illinois. It is remarkably cold, muddy, and rapid. Its overflowings are considerable. They happen in the months of June and July. Their commencement being so much later than those of the Missisipi, would induce a belief that the sources or the Missouri are northward of those of the Missisipi; unless we suppose that the cold increases again with the ascent of the land from the Missisipi westwardly. That this ascent is great, is proved by the rapidity of the river. Six miles above its mouth it is brought within the compass of half a mile's width; yet the Spanish merchants at Pancore or St. Louis, say they go two thousand miles up it. . . . What is the shortest distance between the navigable waters of the Missouri and those of the North River [Rio Del Norte or Rio Grande], or how far this is navigable above Santa Fe, I could never learn."

At another place²⁷ in the book occurs the following: "A Mr. Stanley, taken prisoner near the mouth of the Tanissee, relates

21 A good idea of the wide range of interests of men of the time is conveyed by the Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, of which Jefferson was a leading member. Philosophy meant any and all kinds of knowledge. But the very best means of gauging the intellectual interests of Jefferson himself is to run over the nine hundred and thirty-one titles of works in his private library. See Cat. of Pres. Jefferson's Library, Washington 1829. It shows that he consciously tried to compass the entire range of human knowledge.

22 The edition before me is that in Ford's Jefferson, III.

23 Ibid, 112.

24 Ibid, 114.

25 Ibid, 130.

26 Ibid, 92.

27 Page 130. On the same page we find the unique incident: "A delegation of warriors from the Delaware tribe having visited the Governor of Virginia [Jefferson] during the present revolution, on matters of business, after these had been discussed and settled in council, the Governor asked them some questions relative to their country, and among others, what they knew or had heard of the animal whose bones were found at the Saltlicks on the Ohio. Their chief speaker immediately put himself in an attitude of oratory, etc."

that, after being transferred through several tribes, from one to another, he was at length carried over the mountains west of the Missouri to a river which runs westwardly." By putting this with his description of the Missouri, we shall probably have a fairly complete view of the state of Jefferson's knowledge, in 1782, of the Missouri River route to the far West. This, therefore, is the proper point of departure in tracing the growth of the idea of Western exploration.

On the 26th of November, 1782, Jefferson wrote a letter to James Steptoe, thanking him for an indicated willingness to procure for Jefferson some of the "big bones" to be found on the Ohio. He adds: "Any information of your own on the subject of the big bones or their history or on anything else in the Western country will come acceptably to me, because I know you see the works of nature in the great, & not merely in detail. Descriptions of animals, vegetables, minerals, or other curious things, notes on the Indians' formation of the country between the Mississippi & waters of the South Sea, &c., &c., will strike your mind as worthy being communicated."²⁸ It was one year afterward, December 4, 1783, that Jefferson wrote the now well-known letter²⁹ to George Rogers Clark, suggesting an exploration "from the Mississippi to California," and asking the Western general how he would like to lead an expedition for such a purpose.³⁰ We do not know precisely what the English exploring project was to which Jefferson alludes in the letter to Clark. Neither do we know what route would have been followed if this expedition had materialized, though it is quite conceivable, from Jefferson's clear knowledge of the various routes from the Mississippi to Santa Fe and to Mexico as shown in his "Notes," that the Southern route would at this time have been selected.³¹

The evolution of the exploring idea from this point has been fully worked out, in a great variety of forms, and published in many different books; the meeting of Jefferson and Ledyard in Paris, 1786, and the resulting project of an exploration from Nootka Sound eastward; Jefferson's relation to the Michaux scheme of 1792, and the culmination of all earlier plans in the great expedition sent out under Lewis and Clark in 1803. A repetition of the details would be superfluous, since these can be

²⁸ I follow the Congress edition in the above. Ford has it, III, 63, "notes on the Indians, information of the country," etc., making a comma out of an apostrophe, unless the Congress edition reverses the process.

²⁹ "I find" he says, writing from Annapolis, where Congress was then sitting, "they have subscribed a very large sum of money in England for exploring the country from the Mississippi to California; they pretend it is only to promote knowledge. I am afraid they have thought of colonizing into that quarter. Some of us have been talking here in a feeble way of making the attempt to search that country. But I doubt if we have enough of that kind of spirit to raise the money. How would you like to lead such a party? tho I am afraid the prospect is not worth asking the question." Am. H. Rev. III, 675.

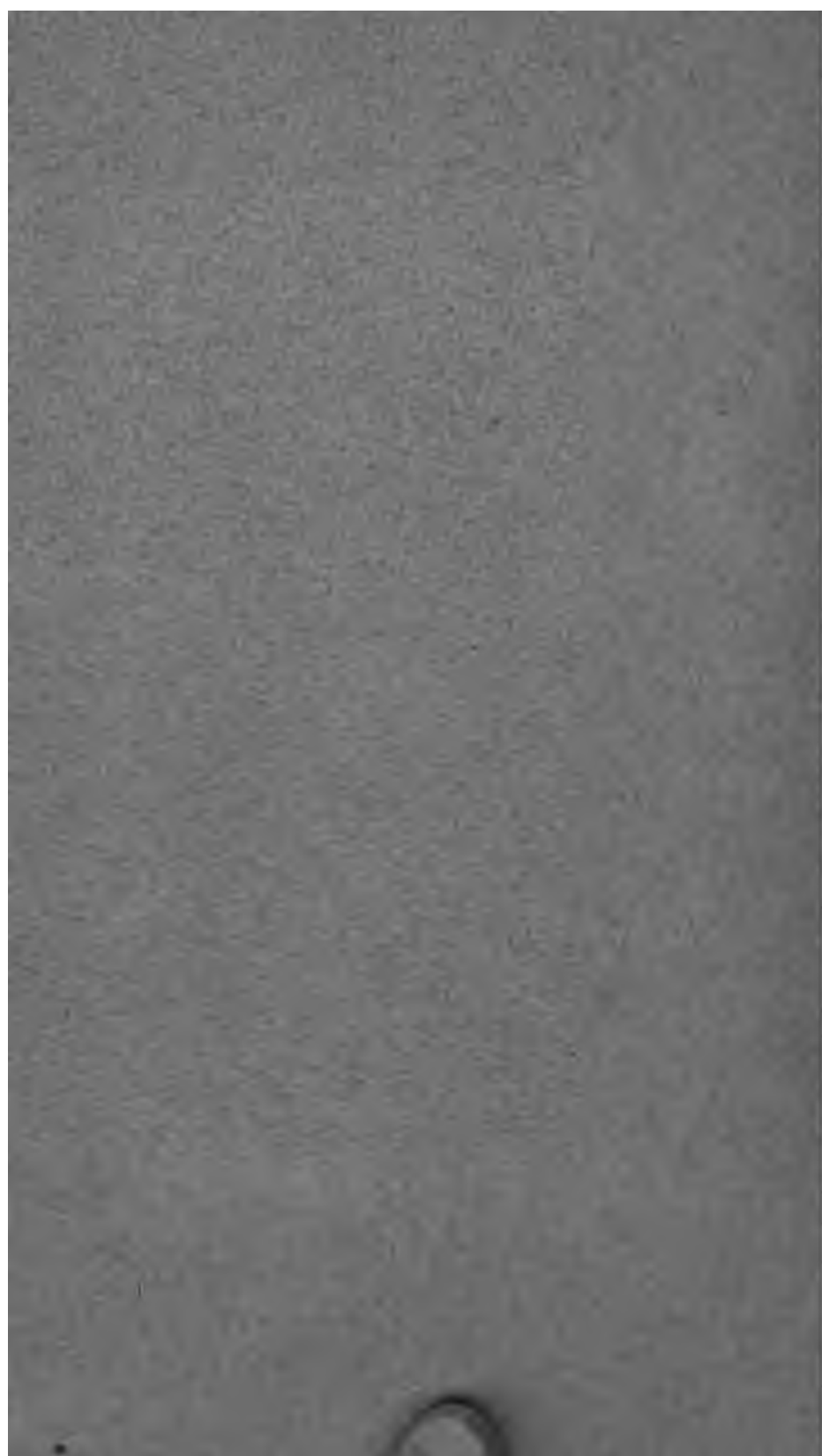
³⁰ It was Clark's younger brother, William, who accompanied Lewis in 1803-6.

³¹ He gives the distances from Santa Fe to the Gulf, to New Orleans, and to the city of Mexico, with a description of the routes. III, 130.

found very readily in print.³² Suffice it to say that Lewis and Clark, with their band of hardy frontiersmen, ascended the Missouri to its source, crossed the Rocky Mountains to the navigable waters of Lewis River (although they had previously been on Clark's Fork, a more northerly branch of the Columbia), and floated down to the western ocean, reaching it in November, 1805. After a winter spent in the wilds of Oregon, they returned by nearly the same route, to the United States in the summer of 1806. The significance of their explorations will appear in the discussion of later phases of this subject.

(End of Part I.)

³² The best source for the history of this expedition is Thwaites (Editor) *The Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, Dodd, Mead & Co., N. Y., 1904-5. An account of the origin of the expedition is given in the editor's introduction. Other accounts, in brief narrative form, of the origin of the expedition and of the journey itself, are to be found in Schafer, *A History of the Pacific Northwest* and the same author's *Pacific Slope and Alaska*.





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